



# News Release

Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

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## Local Working Group Meetings Planned

*Local meetings open to individuals interested in setting natural resources goals for Nebraska.*

**Ainsworth NE, February 21, 2024** - A Local Working Group that provides advice on the priorities for many U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs will meet (March 13, 2024) at the Ainsworth Conference Center (606 East 4<sup>th</sup> St., Ainsworth, NE 69210).

The public is encouraged to attend and express their natural resource concerns. Ideas generated from the public will help the U.S. Department of Agriculture tailor their natural resource programs to meet the needs identified locally.

There is a Local Working Group in each Natural Resources District (NRD). Membership on the Local Working Group includes Federal, State, county, Tribal or local government representatives according to Christine Lousias, district conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) whose agency guides the Local Working Group alongside the Middle Niobrara NRD..

“The Local Working Group recommends to the NRCS State Conservationist how conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), or Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) would be used most effectively in their area. This recommendation can include special target areas, cost share rates on conservation programs, which conservation practices should have cost assistance, or how many dollars could be needed,” said Lousias. This work group allows local input into how Federal dollars are spent, she said.

Typically, Nebraska NRCS obligates anywhere between \$45 million to over \$75 million dollars to farmers and ranchers statewide through NRCS conservation programs. These programs helped landowners and operators make natural resource improvements to their land, water, or wildlife. This funding was allocated according to the priorities set by the Local Working Group.

For more information about the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the programs and services they provide, contact your local USDA Service Center or [www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov).

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